

Health

Everybody in our country has the right to choose a doctor and many people go to one family doctor. At present two types of health facilities operate in this country: state and private ones.

Medical care is provided for our citizens from birth to death. Each of us is looked after even before birth under the scheme called prenatal care which includes medical check-ups before the child is born and then maternity ward services. Soon after birth each child is vaccinated against such illnesses as tuberculosis (TB), diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, polio and later smallpox. Due to vaccination and better hygiene these illnesses have either disappeared or are not fatal any more.

Each school child is under medical supervision which means that he or she has to undergo a series of preventive medical and dental check ups where his body is examined, his teeth checked and eyesight tested.

When we grow out of our children's diseases such as a cold, otitis, measles, mumps, rubeola or chicken-pox we do not have to go to the doctor so often. If we are not hypochondriacs we try to get over our cold easily by staying in bed, taking pills, keeping warm, sweating, gargling and drinking herbal tea with honey or lemon. But sometimes if a patient is trying to overcome a feverish sickness without staying in bed and curing it properly, he takes a risk, as the illness often leaves very dangerous aftereffects.

If we still feel unwell, we finally decide to see a physician who is called a General Practitioner (GP). It is better to make an appointment with the doctor in his surgery time (during his office hours) if we want to avoid long waiting in the waiting room which may often be crowded. Then the nurse says "Next please" and invites us into the consulting room. The nurse has to look for our medical record and wants to see our insurance card and then takes our temperature. Then we are ready to enter the surgery (consulting room). The doctor usually asks what the trouble is and then asks us to strip to the waist because he or she must examine our chest and throat. The doctor wants to know if we have a temperature, a good appetite and where we feel pain. Then he or she listens to our lungs and heart and we have to take a deep breath or stop breathing according to his orders. He also wants us to open our mouth and say "Ah" to see if our tonsils are red. Sometimes he or she checks the blood pressure and feels the pulse, takes the blood count and throat culture or puts urine through lab tests. We have to say how we feel, if we have a headache, a sore throat, a cold, a cough, or if we are sick and hoarse.

Finally the doctor diagnoses the case and therapy and prescribes a medicine. Most often we suffer from a common infection such as flu, tonsillitis, bronchitis or pneumonia. At the pharmacy (at the chemist's in Britain) we get antibiotics, vitamins, pain relievers and gargle. We can also buy some medicinal herbs to prepare herbal tea.

In more serious cases of if we get injured we can call the doctor to our home. Sometimes we may be taken to hospital by an ambulance. In case of unconsciousness or heart attack the patient is put on a stretcher. For car accidents a special helicopter may be called up. Sometimes it is necessary to give first aid such as mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, to stop bleeding or fix fractures.

In the hospital the injured people are examined and X-rayed at a casualty ward (emergency room). Serious cases are immediately operated on in the operating theatre (room). Before the operation the patient must pass several tests and then just before the operation he is anaesthetized by means of an injection or inhalation of a narcotic. After the operation a scar often remains. The patient is sometimes sent to a health resort or a spa for rehabilitation. There he undergoes water treatment, takes baths, massage, remedial exercises and drinks the waters.

However, there are fatal illnesses like cancer or AIDS which are incurable so far. But the best way to cure yourself of a disease is not to catch it, because prevention is better than cure. We can keep our health by physical training, hardening our body, through sport, regular daily routine, sufficient sleep, wholesome food and avoiding alcohol, cigarettes and stress.

Questions on the text:

1. What care is provided to our citizens during their life time?
2. What diseases are we vaccinated against?
3. What are considered to be children's illnesses?
4. How can we cure a cold without going to a doctor?
5. What does a nurse usually do before you enter a surgery?
6. What does the doctor want us to do before and during the examination?
7. What information is he interested in?
8. How do you describe your troubles if you have flu or tonsillitis?
9. What does the doctor say after the examination?
10. What kind of medicine can we get at the pharmacy?
11. How are serious patients treated?
12. What is meant by first aid?
13. How is a patient prepared for an operation?
14. What treatment often follows an operation?
15. How can everybody keep his or her health?

Vocabulary:

Healthy, ill:

be healthy/well, patient, fall/become ill, feel ill/unwell, be down with flu, catch a cold/some infection, sick child, feel sick, airsick, carsick, seasick, get better/well/rid of, be gone, go away, grow worse, recover from [ri'kavə], recovery,

15. Act dialogues between a doctor and a patient using the following phrases:

What's the matter with you?	I've got a bad cough (a stomachache, a cold, a terrible headache, a sore throat, an infection in my eye, sore eyes, indigestion, an upset stomach...)
What's troubling you?	I feel sick, tired, unwell, ill ...
Where do you feel the pain?	I've got a pain in my chest/back ...
	I feel ...
	I sneeze and cough.
	I have trouble with my stomach ...
	I've got something wrong with my finger/eye ... I can't move it.
	There's something wrong with my elbow/neck.
	My gall bladder is troubling (bothering) me.
	My stomach is giving me pain.
	I am hoarse/run-down ...
	My leg hurts/aches.
	I slipped and I have broken my arm.
When did it start?	It started ...
Have you had it long?	Not long, since last week.
Does it hurt all the time?	No, only when I touch it (when I swallow, before/after meals ...)
Have you got a temperature?	Yes, I took my temperature in the morning and it was 38.5 °C.
Have you got any other troubles (complaints)?	I don't sleep well, I have no appetite and I sweat a lot.
Let me examine you./I'd like to examine you.	
Take off your shirt./Strip to the waist.	
Does it hurt when I press here?	Yes, a little. Is it serious?
Is it painful?	
Don't worry. It's nothing serious but you must stay in bed for a few days.	How long must I stay away from school (work ...)?
I'll prescribe some medicine for you and the nurse will give you an injection.	Thank you, Doctor. When shall I call again?

Medical care in the Slovak Republic, Great Britain and the USA

Although medical care in our country is basically free of charge, the government encourages all citizens to be responsible for their health and has introduced a system in which the patient partly shares the cost of some treatment and medicine.

According to law, all citizens are covered by health insurance. Though there are several health insurance companies, both state and private, most people belong to the General Health Insurance Company. The Health Insurance System is currently undergoing some changes. Employers pay health insurance for their employees but private persons must pay for their insurance themselves while the state pays the insurance for children and retired people.

In Britain, the National Health Service provides free health care to all people in the country. Everybody is free to choose a general practitioner (GP) in his own home area and be registered on his list. In towns it is usual for three or four GPs to join together in partnership and thus share the cost of expensive medical technology.

If you need special treatment, the doctor will send you to see a specialist at the local hospital. In an emergency, you can call an ambulance by dialling 999 from any telephone. In England, the companies also pay insurance for their employees and the government for other people.

In the United States, there are two different types of health insurance. Most people have private health insurance. If you have a fractured arm, a heart attack, or even a blister, it is possible to choose your doctor and have treatment. You pay the doctor, and then send the bill for the treatment to your insurance company. They will then send you the money. The problem is that private health insurance is expensive, especially for treatment that needs specialists, such as treatment for heart attacks. If one is poor, the government will pay the doctor for treatment. Many people, however, are not poor, but do not have the money to pay for private health insurance because it is very expensive. If they fall ill, they must pay for it themselves. This is a big problem now in the USA, because a hospital must take care of people, if they fall very ill, even if they do not have the money, and this is difficult for many hospitals.

Questions on the text:

1. What is the health system in our country like?
2. Describe the system of health care in Britain and the USA.
3. What system of health care would you like to have?